Strange and Terrible

News from Sea.

Or: A True Relation of a Most Wonderful Violent

TEMPEST

OF

Lightning and Thunder.

On *Fryday*, the 18*th*. of this Instant *Jan.* 1678.

Whereby the Main-Maſt of a Ship, Riding at Anchor off of *Cows* was ſplit from the top to the bottom: Fourteen Men upon the Upper Deck, and Three between Decks ſtruck, and Five of them left for Dead, their Eyes and Teeth being Immoveable, and their Bodies ſtincking ſo of Sulpher, that none could endure the ſmell.

With ſeveral other Lamentable Paſſages Communicated in a Letter from a Gentleman on Board, to a Friend in *Cheap-ſide*.

With Allowance, Ro. L'Eſtrange.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Strange and Terrible

Nevvs from Sea. &c.

'TIs generally known what exceeding rough and tempestuous Weather we have had of late; and I presume few parts of England have escaped the Notice. I wish all may have avoided the harms of that prodigious Storm that happened on Fryday the 18th, instant, about three a clock in the morning: at London it was very surprising and dreadful, coming with so sudden and impetuous a violence like a Hurriance, that it generally affrighted people, making many leap out of their Beds in astonishment, as if Dooms-day had been at hand, to inform themselves better of this unexpected occasion of terror; it being followed with such an excessive Volly of Hail, that the like has hardly been known in our Age; and several of the Watch-men have assur'd me, That divers of the Hail-stones at their first descent were very little inferiour to Pidgeons (nay, some say Pullets) Eggs in Magnitude; The Thunder and Light-

ning that proceeded, was very considerable here, but nothing so extraordinary as in parts remote, and especially at Sea, of it's strange and lamentable effects there; we have one very remarkable instance, faithfully Communicated from a Gentleman on Board, as follows.

ON *Tuesday* last we sail'd to *Cows*, the wind coming up at West, we cast Anchor there, intending to take the opportunity of the first fair wind, but it continued not only contrary, but also extream high blustering and outragious, and on *Thursday* a prodigious mixture of so much Rain, Hail, Wind, Thunder, and Lightning, as if the Element had been Involved in civil Wars, and *Factious Meteors* had took a solemn league to depose the Sun, and huddle the World into it's primitive Chaos of Darkness, Confusion and Horror: but this was still but a suitable Prologue to a more dismal tragedy; for behold! about three a clock on *Fryday* morning, (*the very time of the mighty storm at* London) there brake a Clap of thunder so dreadful into our Ship, that we all Imagin'd one of our Guns had casually took fire, and went off, but were soon taken off from

from that Imagination, when we perceived the hideous flaſhes of lightning which acccompanied it: ſo dreadfully as if all the Planets deſcending from their Orbs had with United fires ſet the Hemiſphere into a general and continued Blaze; Nor was the terror of the ſight all the effect it had upon us, but in a moment it ſplit our main maſt, as eaſily as you would peal a ruſh, from the very top to the bottom in the Hold: Nor did other parts of our tackle ſpeed much better: for our main top-maſt was ſhivered into ſmall peices, and the pendent at the Main-top-maſt-head burned to Aſhes, but what was ſtill more ſad: it beat down by its violent impetuoſity Fourteen men upon the deck, and had like to have hurl'd ſeveral into the Sea, nay it caſt dovvn three that vvere betvveen the Decks: for its force was ſo great, and with all its operation ſo ſubtile, being as it were a Spirituous body that nothing could withſtand it.

On theſe poor men that had the ill fortune to be hurt by it: Five of them for a conſiderable time after were taken for dead, having no Simptomes of life left: for there was not the leaſt Perception of Breath or Pulſe, and both thei

Eye

Eyes and Teeth were Immovable, and yet had no visible wound, bruise, or hurt about them, but stunck so extreamly of Sulpher (or Brimstone) that we could hardly endure to go near them. In this desperate condition they continued half an hour or thereabouts: But at last by rubbing them, forsing open their mouth, and pouring down spirits and other restoritive Cordials, we recover'd them to some operations of Vitality, & do hope to preserve all their lives, but they are so strangely Crazed in their senses that 'tis feared they will scarce ever enjoy the exercise of their reason and understandings so fully as formerly.

Besides these, there are 6 more that are miserably burn'd through their cloaths, *I mean their flesh* scorch'd, and yet their garments not consumed, nor so much as sing'd as far as we can perceive; their Skin is much discoloured, and looks as it were burnt to a Coal, but the doctor does not doubt to cure them perfectly. By reason of this disasterous Accident, we are forc'd to return to *Portsmouth* for reparation, &c. Dated *Jan.* 20*th.* 1677.

By this most certain and plain Relation, we may

may perceive the wonderful ſtrange force of Lightning, how ſtrong it is, and how penetrating, how ſudden in its Approach, how terrible in its Execution. Philoſophers have treated largely both of the Generation of thunder and lightning, as alſo of their diſmal effects: But methinks none has deſcribed it with a more happy mixture of Judgement and Fancy, than the Noble *Du Bartas*, whoſe words with ſome ſmall variation I ſhall preſume here to repeat.

-------Hark! Hark! methinks
The Worlds wall ſhakes, the Earths foundation ſhrinks;
And ſure the Furies in black Erebus,
Tranſport their Hell between the Heaven and us:
Thunder! what's that? they ſay a vapour moiſt,
Which both from freſh and from ſalt water's hoiſt:
In the ſame inſtant with Hot Exhalations,
In the aiery Regions ſecondary Stations;
Where fiery Fumes beſieg'd with the Crowd,
And keen-cold thickneſs of that dampiſh cloud;
Strengthen their ſtrength, and with redoubled Vollies,
Of joyned heat on the cold Leaguer ſallies:
And without reſting, loud it groans and grumbles,
And rouls, and roars, and round, round, round, it rumbles:

Till

Till having rent the lower side asunder,
With sulph'ry flash it does go off in thunder.
This Lightning of a purer Fume is fram'd,
Through't's own hot-dryness evermore inflam'd;
Whose power past credit, without rasing skin,
Can bruise to powder all our bones within;
Can melt the Gold that greedy Misers hoard,
In closebarr'd Coffers, and not burn the Board;
Can melt the Blade, and never singe the sheath,
Can scorch an Infant in the Womb to Death.
And never Blemish in one sort or other,
Flesh, Bone, or Sinew of th' amazed Mother:
Consume the shooes, and never hurt the feet,
Empty a Cask, and yet not perish it, &c.

These properties we have in part seen verified in this Narrative: May all people lead their lives in sobriety and godliness, *Working out their Salvation with fear and trembling*; that guarded with faith and a good conscience, they may either avoid, or with a Christian Resolution meet all such sudden calamities. Certainly he that seriously considers the Majesty and Power of our Creator Manifested in the amazing Voice of thunder can never be an Atheist: those that would know more of the nature of Lightning, let them read *Fulle* of Meteors. Finis.

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